

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 69
By Trail

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Howard Hooper Penuel,
Sr. of Rutherford County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Howard Hooper Penuel, Sr., former Rutherford County Trustee and a highly respected community leader; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Penuel was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born to the late Marion Haywood and Cora Alice Dill Penuel on the final day of 1912, Mr. Penuel learned his core values of hard work, dependability, and honesty while working on his family's Depression-era farm during his youth; a self-educated man, he attended high school at Lascassas but never graduated, as he left his formal education to help his family survive the hard times of the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, before locating in Rutherford County, Mr. Penuel labored as a farmer, school bus driver, and baseball player; in the 1960s, he formed a partnership with Spencer Reed to operate Seventy-Nine Auto Body Shop, a venture which thrived for twenty remarkable years, and he was later co-owner, with his son Hooper, of Penuel's Surplus Sales; and

WHEREAS, keenly interested in public service, Howard Hooper Penuel, Sr. was elected as Rutherford County Trustee in 1978; he served with acumen and alacrity in that important position for sixteen years until taking a well-deserved retirement in 1994; and

WHEREAS, as an elected official, Mr. Penuel earned the respect of his fellow government officials and the citizens of Rutherford County for the exemplary quality of his public service, his unsurpassed work ethic, and his unquestionable integrity; and

WHEREAS, “Mr. Democrat,” as he was fondly known in Rutherford County's political circles, was respected throughout the political community of Tennessee; he had been appropriately honored as Trustee of the Year and had formerly served as president of the County Officials Association of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, as Trustee, Mr. Penuel expertly managed Rutherford County's finances during a time of tremendous growth; and

WHEREAS, the memories and recollections of Howard Hooper Penuel are invariably full of praise; in recalling the influence of Mr. Penuel, current Trustee Evans Maples summed up his predecessor as a “magnificent gentleman,” and former Rutherford County Executive John Mankin remembered Mr. Penuel’s unparalleled devotion to public service by articulating, “He had more interest in county government than anyone we ever had in office”; and

WHEREAS, in addition to flying his single-engine BaLouca and meeting with the Old Timer’s Baseball and Sportsman Club, Mr. Penuel liked to pass the time by walking around the Murfreesboro Public Square and stopping to talk with almost everyone he saw; one of his many friends warmly remembered Mr. Penuel’s friendly visits by saying “You knew that the day was going to get better when you saw Mr. Penuel step quietly through the door”; and

WHEREAS, a devout Christian, Mr. Penuel was an active member of the Third Baptist Church, where he was an inspirational example to his fellow Christians; and

WHEREAS, this venerable Tennessean was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; he was the devoted

father of Hooper Penuel, Jr. and the late Richard Lewis Penuel, Sr.; and the proud and loving grandfather of seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, “Mr. Democrat” passed his heritage of public service on to the generations who follow him; his son, Hooper, currently serves as Rutherford County Election Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Howard Hooper Penuel, Sr. shared love and companionship with his first wife, Mary Frances Winn Penuel, until her untimely death; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Penuel’s later years were blissfully spent with his second wife, Darnelle Huff Penuel, who provided support and strength in all of his endeavors; and

WHEREAS, Howard Hooper Penuel, Sr. leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Howard Hooper Penuel, Sr. reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction and his estimable service to his community as Rutherford County Trustee and as a civic leader of the utmost ability and dedication.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and many friends of Mr. Penuel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.